DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 157 429 HE 010 248

AUTHOR Kobrak, Peter
TITLE Defining Effective Community Service in a University Setting.
PUB DATE Apr 78
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the 1978 Convention of the National University Extension Association (Indianapolis, Indiana, April 11, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Personnel; Attitudes; College Deans; College Faculty; *Community Service Programs; Higher Education; Needs Assessment; *Outreach Programs; *School Community Relationship; *School Responsibility; *School Surveys; Speeches
IDENTIFIERS Department Chairpersons; *Western Michigan University

ABSTRACT

Results are presented of a survey designed to elicit the views of deans, department chairpersons, directors of centers and institutes, administrators, faculty, and clientele groups at Western Michigan University on the actual and appropriate role of community service in a university setting. A wide disparity is found between the services the faculty expect and would like the university to provide. Business, government, and private nonprofit institutions differ in their needs, but all would like more contact with the university than is generally believed. To meet such needs, "community" must be viewed as a dynamic concept that varies as a function of the changing needs, interests, and compositions of constituencies external to the university campus. "Service" must include those mutually-defined, initiated, and mutually beneficial activities that contribute to the development of productive community-university interaction. Periodic redefinition of "relevant" service must be accepted as an integral part of managerial responsibility by university administrators. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED157429

DEFINING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY SERVICE IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Peter Kobrak

Acting Director
Center for Public Administration Programs
Western Michigan University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Peter Kobrak

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Prepared for delivery at the 1978 Convention of the
National University Extension Association (NUEA)
in Indianapolis, Indiana, April 11, 1978

HE010248

ABSTRACT

Defining Effective Community Service in a University Setting

This paper presents the results of a survey designed to elicit the views of deans, department chairpersons, directors of centers and institutes, administrators, faculty, and clientele groups on the actual and appropriate role of community service in a university setting. A definition of community service conducive to the effective delivery of services must be designed in accord with the divergent views found in this pluralistic system. The survey reveals that deans and administrators, even while they support community service, differ markedly in their definitions and receive little information on such activity. Instead, they rely on departments that maintain traditional university values and on a faculty that manifests little information about the centers and institutes that are the repositories of community service on campus. A wide disparity is found between the services the faculty expect and would like the university to provide. Business, government, and private nonprofit institutions differ in their needs, but all would like more contact with the university than is generally believed. To meet such needs, "community" must be viewed as a dynamic concept which varies as a function of the changing needs, interests, and compositions of constituencies external to the university campus. "Service" must include those mutually-defined, mutually-initiated, and mutually beneficial activities which contribute to the development of productive community-university interaction. Periodic redefinition of "relevant" service must be accepted as an integral part of managerial responsibility by university administrators.

DEFINING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY SERVICE IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

The social and political unrest of the sixties generated a considerable debate over the appropriate role of the university in providing services to needy urban and rural areas and other segments of the community. Intellectual historian Jacques Barzun expressed perhaps most eloquently the case for maintaining the ivory tower (2), while former Common Cause head John Gardner is well known for his vigorous position in favor of more extensive and direct university involvement in community problems (5). Thanks partly to the Ford Foundation and more recently the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, the seventies have witnessed an outpouring of works on the university and the "urban crisis" suggesting how and why the university could become more deeply committed (3, 4). Slowed by the uneven record compiled by universities in combating societal problems and sobered by declining enrollments, these authors have sought a revisionist position that would strike a balance among teaching, research, and community service. Indeed, one such author has allowed that there is less disagreement than would be apparent among writers who have argued that involvement should be increased, that special types of higher education should be created to deal with the "urban crisis," that universities should put their own houses in order first, and that there are limits to the services universities can render (1, pp. 142-151).

The University as a Political System and the Role of Community Service. Whatever the rhetoric, the reality is that universities have rarely made an institution-wide commitment to community service. No doubt there are numerous reasons why community service remains a secondary objective for most universities or, as one writer puts it, a "residual category"

(8, p. 5), but none seems more fundamental than the lack of a common understanding of what community service is and should be among participants in the university itself. These misperceptions and value differences are particularly significant because of the nature of a university. Economist Charles E. Lindblom has written that Yale may be viewed as a political system characterized by a "complex collection of inter-acting participants in a collective policy-making process." While regional and urban universities differ markedly from elite universities, they too seem shot through with the conflicting interests described by Lindblom in the case of Yale:

> ...departments competing for budgetary allocations, faculty and alumni pulling and hauling in opposite directions on the Admission Office, research and teaching interests in conflict, non-tenured faculty restive if not smarting under indignities not suffered by their tenured seniors. And finally, the system is marked by major decisions, like the Provost's budgetary allocations, that reveal the power of office (9, p. 9).

In examining the fate of community service within the university, one must add to this pluralistic process the Deans, Directors of Centers and Institutes, and Departmental Chairpersons and the clientele groups whom the university does, or conceivably might, serve.

It is the mutually dependent nature of this decision-making process that necessitates examining the views of all participants on community service and calculating how their goals mesh with effective university participation in solving community problems. Elegant definitions of community service and inspirational talks by university presidents will lead to little activity, unless they dovetail with the goals and needs of other university actors who must agree to participate. It is, therefore, surprising how little attention the meshing of these university participants,

or actors, has recieved in a literature long on think pieces and short on rigorous analysis.

The purpose of this paper then is to examine the findings of a survey designed to elicit views of participants in the university decision-making process, and subsequently provide a definition of community service in accord with those views and more conducive to the effective delivery of what the university does have to offer. The survey focused on a single case, Western Michigan University (WMU), and one must, therefore, generalize with some care. Many of the problems, however, seem endemic particularly to regional and urban universities that, in contrast to the elite universities, have borne much of the community service function, and wherever possible, corroberating evidence is drawn from other sources. WMU possesses 60 M.A. and eight doctoral programs, and has an enrollment of approximately 17,000 undergraduates and 4,000 graduate students. Located in southwestern Michigan, it is the only university west of the state capitol, Lansing, and south of Grand Rapids.

DIVERGENT UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVES ON AN APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY SERVICE ROLE

Community service as a function of the university may be carried out on several levels simultaneously, and additionally may be substantively different from one level to another. For example, the decision of the Board of Trustees to admit to classes persons over the age of 60 on a space-available, no-charge basis is certainly a community service. It cannot, however, be regarded as a service provided by any one or a number of university divisions, but must be considered a service provided to the community by the university as a whole. In order to derive a more complete picture of community service within the university, therefore,

it is necessary to examine the numerous university actors who closely interrelate but remain separate and distinct. Colleges may include community service components that are substantively and organizationally different from those of departments; departments may differ from centers or institutes; and the interests of individual faculty members, particularly their professional orientation, differentiate them from the perspective of the organizational units. The survey thus sought out the views of the following groups: Deans, Directors, and Chairpersons; the President and Vice Presidents; the faculty; and clientele groups.

1. The Deans. The differing perspectives of the seven Deans who responded in the survey on the nature and role of community service is perhaps not difficult to understand. Administrators at this level within the university preside over markedly different units. It is a rare Dean of Continuing Education or of a Graduate College who includes an academic department within his or her unit, and even at this high level in the organizational structure, professional training is largely segregated from more traditional academic disciplines.

When asked how their particular college or division defined "community service," two Deans answered that they followed the definition found in University Policies. The other five Deans did not mention this source, perhaps because the university's policy remains at a high level of generality, and is only available in a relatively obscure, mimeographed document. The Deans answered in terms of a wide variety of specific examples including membership on policy-making boards and groups; political activity at any level; leadership in such voluntary efforts as churches, youth organizations, museums, civic organizations, and fund drives; or particular organizational functions such as planning, programming or evaluation.

Sometimes conditions were attached to community service within a university setting. Appropriate activities should be: related to professional status; pertinent to university-community relationships; paid or unpaid but provided in the area of an academic discipline to segments within the community to which the individual would not otherwise provide such services; or only unpaid services to persons not members of the faculty or student body.

There was general agreement among the Deans that the operationalization of community service for promotion and tenure purposes is a departmental responsibility, and apparently is one of several criteria that Deans expect departments to utilize. The Deans are satisfied that their colleges or divisions do provide community services primarily through centers and institutes housed within them and also through the work of individual faculty serving the community in relationship to their areas of professional expertise. Only the College of Fine Arts, where throughout the nation the academic expectation of performance dovetails neatly with community service, possesses all-college committees and activites both on-and off-campus.

Five Deans believed that their college or division should become active in other kinds of community service activities including specifically interaction with alumni and an information retrieval system which would direct those outside the university to individuals most suited to aid their individual needs. However, four saw problems in extending services to the community, particularly lack of interest and time on the part of some units and lack of interest on the part of the community in some areas of academic expertise. Two Deans suggested the need for more specific university policy here. As one put it, "The University needs

to decide where it stands in the provision of such services, establish criteria for assigning faculty time to such participation, and then, let some significant portion of this service be a part of the individual's assigned load." Another concluded pessimistically that additional resources would not be available for such work, and hence the "trade off is to take time and effort from qualified faculty who should and would like to develop their programs and professional expertise to participate in things of less value to the university."

2. Department Chairpersons. Of the 40 (out of 45) Department Chairpersons responding to the survey, 26 percent indicated that the department had no definition of community service; only 16 percent depended on the University Policies definition; 13 percent counted only service relevant to one's professional commitment as legitimate; and the remaining 45 percent gave substantive definitions. The substantive definitions varied but generally reflected one of several themes: (1) membership on boards and committees within the community; (2) direct professional services such as consultation, diagnosis, treatment, lectures, or workshops; (3) use of staff time for the benefit of the community; or (4) activites unrelated to career or profession.

Depite the expectations of the Deans that the criterion of community service was applied to faculty activities at the departmental level, only 11 Chairpersons indicated that their Department had formally-sanctioned definitions of community service. Slightly fewer than half of the Chairpersons said that their definitions were not the result of formal faculty action, and the remainder did not answer. When asked more specifically how they formally take community service activities into account for tenure and promotion purposes, only two departments stated flatly that

they had a policy, while two rejected the criterion, and all of the others simply indicated that they had no regular policy. Eleven used the vita, resumes, forms or lists submitted by faculty members. The remaining nineteen applied less rigorous, substantive "formulae." With the exception of one department which stated that community service was an important factor in tenure and promotion, community service generally is the lowest-ranked factor considered--ranking behind not only teaching ability and research and publication but also service to the university or department.

In response to a request to list community service activities of individuals considered appropriate to department policy or programs, 25 percent of the departments did not respond, or indicated that there were none, or that this matter was under discussion within the department. Among the departments that did specify legitimate activities, lack of consistency was particularly noteworthy. One department specifically included service to a church, while another department excluded such activity. Some departments categorized publications and proposal-writing as "community service" activities.

Universities may speak in the abstract about expanding their community service function, but Chairpersons do not seem to share this priority. The Chairpersons were asked if there are other kinds of community services in which they would like their department to be active. Twenty-two percent stated that there were none, and the question did not elicit any response from 50 percent of them. From the responses of the minority of departments that favored expansion, it emerged that they were primarily interested in "professionally-related" community service activities. These activities included workshop presentations, research and develop-

ment, released time for internship placements, and an increase in the time devoted to professional organizations. As such, many of these activities might indirectly aid the community, but they often related more closely to traditional teaching and research functions.

3. Directors of Centers and Institutes. Twenty-two (out of 25) Directors of centers and institutes returned the questionnaires. It is often said that these organizations are the main repositories of community service interest on campus, and two-thirds of the Directors did indeed indicate that their responsibilities included a community service component. The remaining Directors regarded their missions as exclusively concerned with internal affairs of the university, faculty, or student body. In contrast to the Department Chairpersons, the Directors of these organizations operationalized the concept of community service in terms of program, staff, publicity, or the servicing of requests from clientele groups outside the university. The activities conducted by these organizations included research, research concsultation, computer time-sharing, program consultation, program evaluation, workshops, testing, clinical treatment, day care, and tutorial and counseling services.

The center and institute Directors emerge as the focal points for community service to a greater extent than is perhaps realized. Even the requests for assistance come not to the Department Chairpersons and hence to their committees but rather to the Directors. Thanks to the buffer provided by the centers and institutes, the great majority of departmental faculty who are unaffiliated with such an organization remain virtually untouched by outside clientele groups and their concerns. Traditional, internalized standards then become the basis for defining community service and specifying when it is "professionally-relevant."

Two-thirds of the center and institute Directors reported that they had received requests for services that they were unable to fill. Inability to meet such demands sometimes stemmed from inadequate information or a poorly formulated request, but more often denial stemmed from insufficient staff, time, or resource capacity. Not surprisingly, most Directors expressed an interest in expanding their activities. More significantly, in a time of shrinking enrollments and budgets, they were frequently able to point to specific types of existing services that could be expanded, and to elements of the community not already served to whom services could be extended. The Directors' responses indicate a more focused view of community service than those found among Deans and Chairpersons. The difference presumably reflects in part the more specific missions of the centers and institutes which consequently allow directors to specify which activities are and which are not "community service."

4. The President and Vice Presidents. The responses of the President and his four principal Vice-Presidents carry, of course, no statistical significance, but they are of heuristic value, because certain themes emerged from the interviews with these central administrators that differed markedly from the views found at other levels of the university. While recognizing the legitimacy of other levels of service, the majority viewed the "community" primarily in terms of the immediate urban area or the southwestern region of the state. In contrast, responses by other university segments placed the service boundaries more often at the state, interstate, national, or in some cases international levels. These central administrators also generally stressed, by direct statements or examples, that service consisted of voluntary or non-remunerated activities. Speaking to this point, one respondent said, "Volunteer is the important

ingredient for service; otherwise it is a professional activity carried on for a fee."

When asked what specific community service activities they themselves carried out, the responses were numerous and specific. All of the activities mentioned either were what is traditionally termed "volunteer" work or part of their regular university position. Estimates of the time that they devoted to community service activities ranged from 5 to 25 percent. The types of activities included work on state and local boards of governmental and private nonprofit organizations, with service clubs, and with other unique groups which did not seem to fit into anyone else's jurisdiction on campus. While commmunity service in the abstract was defined in terms of voluntary activity, a number of the activities clearly were part of their regular university position. Since tasks of this kind are described somewhat loosely as "voluntary," however, they apparently carry over this classification in viewing community service of other kinds on campus too, and do not acknowledge or recognize the contradiction between their formal position on non-renumeration for community service and the compensation that they themselves receive in doing such work as part of their work assignment.

The top level administrators do not receive regular and orderly reports about community service projects. Respondents mentioned that community service activities are sometimes presented in general terms in departmental or college annual reports, but as one administrator put it, "Such activities are often described in highly abstract terms--'The department did such and such.'" The information then, in the words of another administrator, "is aggregated and is not fine enough to ascertain the mix of community service activities or to reward people for their

community service." Decisions regarding the advisability and feasibility of particular community service proposals are being made by the Deans and Chairpersons. "These individuals," explained another administrator, "are the ones who really are accountable fo the activity of individuals and units assigned to them; they're also the individuals closest to the picture." The results of the Deans' and Chairpersons' surveys notwithstanding, it is these levels within the university to which central administration adheres in deciding or not deciding what community service activities to pursue. These findings thus bear out public administrator Thomas Murphy's contention that within the highly decentralized world of the university, "Few chancellors or presidents are willing to tell a faculty committee that it must approve a new urban program or must reallocate X dollars from existing budgets to fund it (12..p..290)." Small wonder that Presidential exhortations and mission statements pertaining to community service activities often appear to yield limited results.

In their writings university administrators often eye proposed community service functions with caution. Harold Syrett, former President of Brooklyn College, warns that the university today "...is viewed as a public utility into which anyone can be plugged to obtain whatever services he or she desires," and any university subscribing "...to this view will permit itself to be nibbled to death (16, p. 90)." Samuel Gould, an administrator with considerable experience in the State University of New York, pleads for balance, arguing that "academic life can become academic in name only, if service programs, worthy in and of themselves, begin to outweigh the more fundamental parts of the curricula (6, p. 1513)." Administrators polled in this survey too are leery. One administrator pointed out that legislators most often criticized those university

activities off-campus that facilitated social change or that appeared to bring the university into competition with industry, while another alluded resignedly to such activities by faculty members with whom "we must deal but cannot interfere."

5. The Faculty. The faculty questionnaire was distributed to all of the approximately 1,090 members of the faculty; fifteen percent of the faculty responded on an anonymous basis. This response rate is not unusual for a questionnaire of this kind, but one must be cautious in generalizing from this sample group to the entire faculty. There is also the possibility that there may be a bias built into the response in that persons concerned about community service activities may have taken the time to express their views in more cases than their peers, but at least on items concerning rank and membership on the graduate faculty, the group of respondents seems representative. Members of 36 of the 45 departments responded, and no single department accounted for more than seven percent of the respondents.

Of the 157 respondents, as shown in Table One, 71 percent indicated current involvement in community service activities, listing 268 instances of such active involvement. Faculty members rated 61 percent of these activities as "relevant" to department or institute goals, 31 percent as "not related," and in the remaining 8 percent of the cases did not know whether the particular service related to institutional goals. Furthermore, there seems to be strong faculty support for the university to perform a community service function, if the respondents in this group are representative. When asked whether the university has a responsibility to make its professional skills available through community service, 83 percent expressed the view that the university had such a responsibility.

TABLE 1

Community Service Activities Performed by Faculty Members and Perceived as Related or Unrelated to Their Jobs

ACTIVITIES	Number of Activities	Activities Related to the Job	Perceived as Unrelated to the Job	Don't Know
1. Church and other Religious Activities	40	8	31	1
2. School Activities	20	12	4	4
3. Professional and/or Scholarly Associations	14	14		
4. Consulting Activities	16	13	1	2
5. Research Activities	6	6		
6. Political Activities	9	3	3	3
7. National Organizations				
a. Civil Rights, Social and Political Issues	16	11	3	2
b. Charitable Groups	4	1	2	1
c. Unidentified	1	1		
8. State & Regional Organizations				
a. Legal Activities	2	2		
b. Health and Educational Activities	2	2		
c. Recreational Activities	1	1		
d. Governmental Activities	1	1		
e. Unidentified	3	3		
9. City, County and Local Organizations				
a. Environmental Activities	5	3	2	
b. Legal Activities	2	2		
c. Governmental Activities	16	13	3	
d. Neighborhood Groups	5		5	
e. The Arts	12	9	1	2
f. Educational Activities	19	16	3	
g. Recreational and Athletic Activities	15	8	7	
h. Service Clubs	6	1	4	1
i. Activities with Young People	11	4	6	1
j. Social Service Organizations	19	19		
k. Health & Medically Related Activities	3	2	1	
l. Business Activities	2	1	1	
m. Unidentified	15	8	3	4
10. Miscellaneous Activities				
a. American Legion	1			1
b. Marine Corps League	1		1	
c. Military Reserve	1		1	
d. Unidentified	3			
11. No Activities	4			
12. No Answer	42			
TOTALS	268	N = 163 61%	N = 83 31%	N = 22 8%

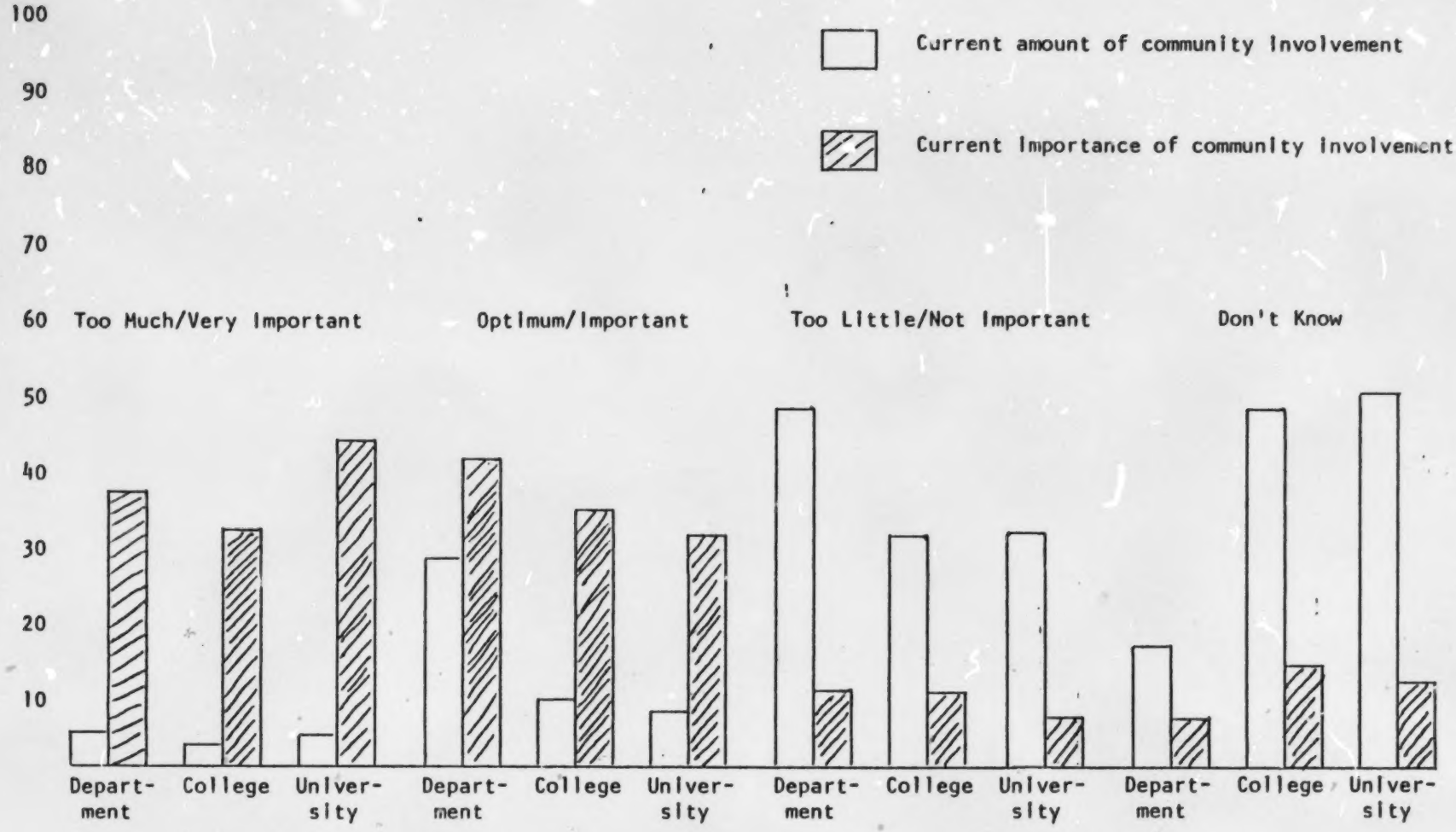
An apparently small but intense minority, however, cautioned that the university should not become engaged in political or moral community issues, and should not become so engaged in community activities as to undermine the quality and quantity of current university functions in teaching and training, research and publications.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the faculty is its own first choice as a source of talent in expanding community service activities, with graduate assistants and graduate students as second and third ranked source areas for personnel. Development of a broader community service strategy assumes that faculty members have the potential to expand such work. To determine how the faculty views its potential for expanding its service commitment, the survey asked whether faculty skills were now used effectively in performing this function and wether they felt that they could be used more effectively. Forty-eight percent reported that their skills were not being effectively utilized in community service, while in marked contrast a clear majority of respondents (56 percent) reported that their skills could be more effectively utilized in such service, and an additional 30 percent either could not or would not respond to the question. Factors listed that precluded greater participation in community services were (1) lack of time, (2) lack of university or departmental acknowledgement or recognition, (3) lack of community contacts, (4) lack of remuneration, and (5) lack of a university organizational mechanism. The major drawback to more co-munity involvement seemed to be a pervasive faculty feeling that university or department reward or recognition for such activities is insufficient when considering such issues as tenure, promotion, and salary. Faculty also came down strongly on this point in a survey conducted at West Virginia University (10, p. 92).

Perhaps the faculty could expand its community service activities, but is either not inclined or sees little need to do so. How does the

faculty evaluate the current level of community service activity in the department, college, and university, and how important in their view is such service at each level? Responses indicated that the faculty generally perceives current levels of community service activity as too low but current importance of such activities as very high, across department, college, and university levels. Figure 1 presents the percent responding to each category across the abscissa from "too much involvement/very important" activity to "too little involvement/not important" activity. For all three levels of the University, the number of responses for level of activity generally fall to the right in the "too little" zone, while the majority of responses to the importance question fall toward the left in the "very important" zone. This divergence clearly indicates a discrepancy between what the faculty sees as too little community service activity at the three levels of university structure and a great deal of importance attached to the value of these activities by the faculty. Furthermore, while the faculty responded with "don't know" more often for the college and university levels of involvement, they did not as often respond with "don't know" when rating the importance of community activities at these more "remote" levels. The faculty seems to be indicating that it may not be as sure of the actual levels of community service in the college and university as a whole, but it, nevertheless, feels that the activities are important at those levels.

What the faculty would like to see here contrasts sharply with what it expects to happen. When asked to express its realistic expectations and its desired future level of community service activity, the faculty expressed interest but exhibited considerable pessimism. It anticipated that future levels of involvement would remain about the same or increase



Note: Differences between percentage sums and 100% are the percentages of no response.

FIGURE 1

Faculty Evaluation of the Current Amount and Important of Community Service Activity at the Department, College, and University Levels

slightly, even while it expressed a preference for greater participation. But what policies or strategies would the faculty then recommend to bring about closer agreement between what it realistically expects to see as future levels of community involvement and what in its view should happen at the department, college, and university levels? Half of the participating faculty did not respond to this question, and another 30 percent answered with reference to only one of the three levels. Respondents indicated that to facilitate a future level of activity that would better match its desired levels of involvement, the faculty would like to have community service activities built into the reward and recognition system, and would like to see more released time made available and a reorganization and redistribution of class rolls. The limited response rate, however, suggests that faculty members generally have devoted little attention to this problem.

When asked specifically, though, whether the lack of a university or departmental facilitating structure through which to work inhibited participation in community service activities, respondents indicated that the lack of such an administrative mechanism has <u>not</u> inhibited more active participation. More than half of the faculty members opposed the development of such structures at either the department or university levels. This view seems to contradict the suggestions made in response to an earlier question when they expressed the view that the university was potentially useful in utilizing faculty skills more fully in community service activity. It may be that the faculty perceives the college or department as a channel, or "clearinghouse," for information which will match faculty skills with community needs, but is not certain that such a function should be formally structured. In any event no individual

faculty member should be forced to participate in such activities.

Desire to maintain faculty autonomy presumably also is reflected in the discrepancy between the posture that the faculty would like departments to assume in formulating general policies and specific goals concerning community service. A large number of respondents reported that their departments either did not have, or they did not know about the existence of, general policies and specific goals dealing with service activities. With regard to specific departmental goals, the faculty generally did not think that such goals should be stated; with respect to general policies, however, there was support for a clearer statement of intent. This statement is consistent with the most prevalent theme running through the faculty survey--a theme that stemmed from a policy issue rather than organizational pathologies or goal problems. Faculty members were often emphatic in stating that in so far as community service activities took away from such university functions as teaching and research, they would actually count against the faculty in terms of reward and recognition. The faculty perceived a significant discrepancy between the university's community service priorities and its failure to reflect those priorities in its reward structure.

6. Clientele Groups. Current and potential clients of the university's community services were also surveyed. These "publics" were divided into three categories: business, government, and private nonprofit institutions (although schools were included here). Since the objective was to receive overall impressions of current community services as well as perceived needs, the resulting judgmental sample implies neither random nor weighted representation. Sixty-two percent of the 141 organizations responded, but the relatively high level of apparent involvement

with the university may be somewhat misleading, since the questionnaires may have been "passed around" among several divisions of the organization. The responses provided information about services currently offered; the degree of utilization by the community of such services; evaluation of the services rendered by the university; and an indication of unfulfilled needs from the perspective of the community.

While a relativel high proportion of the respondents had previous involvement with community service activities provided by the university, the responses indicated relatively more involvement with institutions than with business, while government agencies indicated a level of involvement between the other two "publics." The most frequent contacts between clientele groups and the university emanate from the more prevalent teaching and research activities; each of the three publics thus specified faculty and student research, surveys, and studies as their most frequent type of contact. Businesses, however, frequently mentioned seminars and conferences and student field placement (and other job-related activities), while institutions often pointed to workshops and in-service programs. The variety of specified activities was greater in the case of institutions and government than business. More significantly, many respondents indicated that this survey constituted their first opportunity to provide input on community service activities. Such services apparently stem more from what the university decides to offer than from clientele preferences, and university administrators and faculty alike may have little idea of how extensively various services should be provided.

Regional and state-wide groups were also asked whether they had worked with university personnel in the past and, in a subsequent question, whether they would like to have more, less, or the same involvement in the

future. Those organizations stating that they had already worked with the university and, subsequently, saying that they would like the same or a greater level of involvement in the future were judged to be satisfied with the effectiveness (if not the extent or scope) of current activities. Given the frequent rhetoric criticizing the university and its faculty for their relationship with other organizations, it was surprising how frequently clientele groups rated such contacts very highly. Certainly the communications gap between the university and agency problem solvers identified by economist Edric Weld is there (17, p. 3) as well as the mutual distrust pointed out by Ford Foundation officer William Pendleton (14, p. 10). The size and nature of the sample only allow the identification of trends, but perhaps involved faculty members and institutes are perceived differently by clientele groups, than "the university" as an abstraction or as a political entity. And, as University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Director Samuel Gwinn reminds us, universities in other countries too have achieved considerable success when they moved beyond their confines and said, "Education is knocking at your door (1, p. 21)."

Both those organizations previously involved with university service activities and those without prior contact indicated the existence of needs that are presently unmet. Business groups more frequently specified the need for internship programs and for expanded evening course offerings (which might or might not constitute a community service activity depending on the nature of the course), and often expressed an interest in seeing literature that would spell out available services. Government agencies requested more sharing of surveys and reports and a greater number of workshops. Private nonprofit institutions also cited the need for more

information on service availability, and wanted more university involvement in volunteer work. The number and specificity of the responses underscored that input from the community is available for the asking on what new activities should be developed and what current community services should be expanded. As urban and regional universities redefine their missions in the wake of declining enrollments, they overlook such information at their peril.

TOWARD A UNIVERSITY-WIDE DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

The provision of "community services" by institutions of higher education is encountered frequently among the enumerated responsibilities of a university, but the phrase is seldom defined except inferentially on the basis of specific types of activities in which particular universities become involved. In addition, there may be, as one administrator put it, "...some advantage in not tying the university to a bill of particulars which might be destructive of what is now highly flexible." Furthermore, as Murphy reminds us, resolution of differences between a university and its urban clientele groups is complicated by the value conflicts which encourage a "patchwork approach (12, p. 398)."

But the search through the survey for an implicit or explicit definition at all levels of the university has led ultimately to the recognition that there exists here a complex interaction of contradictory opinions, tentative action assumptions, and unrecorded rationales that are individual, group, and institutional in nature. There evidently is no definition of "community service" at any level, except perhaps in terms of limited agreement among some university personnel that certain activities are excluded from this function. Knowing what the phenomenon is not, however,

cannot be equated with a clear conceptualization of what is it. Then too, even such exclusions carry no guarantee of uniform acceptance among university personnel. Given no common definition of terms, it is not surprising that the questions of individual and institutional involvement in community service seems to be addressed by various university personnel from different starting points and with different personal and institutional interests at stake. The apparent lack of common definition then must be kept in mind when assessing the implications of the survey data, such as the apparent discrepancy between respondents who say that there needs to be greater institutional involvement in initiating, facilitating, and conducting community service activity and those who say it is primarily, if not entirely, an individual matter. Even while the following definition strives to provide a starting point for all levels of the university, however, it introduces no arbitrary or artifactual a priori constraints on any emergent views of the university's present or future community service posture, and it is deliberately set forth in relatively broad terms. As extension specialists Martin Haberman and Lois Quinn point out, given the diversity of university groups, each must adapt community service criteria to its own discipline or field (7, p. 140).

Defining "Community." Traditionally and realistically, that region and those persons in closest physical proximity to the campus proper comprise the community of most immediate relevance and concern to a university. Cognizant, however, of cosmopolitan faculty interests and the varying constituencies upon which a university depends--and to which the university might reasonably be expected to be responsive--it must be recognized also that a "community-of-interest" to the university is not restricted by static political or geographic boundaries. "Community"

must be viewed as a dynamic concept which varies in its definition as a function of the changing needs, interests, and compositions of constituencies which are external to the university campus. Community here refers to a group or groups of individuals formally or informally united by common interests or needs. More formally constituted communities may include--but need not be limited to--educational, business, governmental and human services organizations. As educators Raymond Pietak and Richard Spencer have written, the precise boundaries of community services are difficult to establish, and the nature and scope of a community-centered orientation are dictated by the environment (15, p. 54).

Defining "Service." The mission of any university is primarily educational, and, as psychologist Howard Mitchell reminds us, there arises a tension between educational need and the service function (11, p. 142). But the services rendered by a university to communities-of-interest must not be defined exclusively in terms of formally structured education. Rather, it is the positive extra-university impact--be it educational, economic, psychological or sociological--that must be viewed as the operational definition of "service," whenever that service is not inconsistent with basic university policy. Furthermore, those individuals and administrative units that comprise the university, by virtue of experience and expertise and by virtue of their university affiliation, often make community contributions which differ in kind or degree from those which might be expected of non-university associates of the same community-of-interest. Contributions distinguished in this sense from those of other colleagues also warrant specific university recognition as "community service."

Community service may thus be defined further as positive impact

arising from planned collaborative activity involving both an external community-of-interest and (1) individual members of the university community, (2) component administrative units of the university, or (3) the university as a whole. Community service includes any assistance provided to an off-campus community which is related directly to an individual's academic or professional discipline or to the physical or political resources of the university as these, in turn, relate to the perceived needs of the community itself. It includes all activities for which an individual's university affiliation is the genesis, whether or not those activities are inherent in his or her obligations to the university. Community service includes those mutually-defined, mutually-initiated, and mutually-benefitical activities which contribute to the development and maintenance of productive community-university interaction and may or may not involve monetary reimbursement. It includes, but is not limited to, consultative services, in-service workshops and conferences, and planned university programs designed to benefit an extra-university community. The utilization of staff time or of university physical facilities by extra-university constituencies also should be regarded as community service, along with the provision of formally organized extension courses whenever such courses are provided in response to community needs.

At present there is little evidence <u>at any level</u> of any formal policy or procedure for the kind of interaction between the university examined here (or those institutions described in the literature cited here) and the communities-of-interest identified in this definition. The manner in which the university allocates its resources suggests that little systematic effort is made to promote interaction with the various communities along community services lines. Responses from university personnel

and community members also display a general a general lack of awareness (and, in some cases, lack of concern) with the existence of common concerns and potential for interaction between university and community. The university has done little formally to increase such awareness and interaction.

Defining "Relevance." The parameter of "relevance" requires definition if community service is to attain in fact the weighting attached to it in theory by university policy governing promotion in academic rank. Any definition, however, which presumed university-wide applicability necessarily also would be either too general to be of significant value or so restrictive as to limit severely the capacity of the university to respond meaningfully to its constituencies. The continuously and rapidly changing nature of communities and community needs, as well as the fluid and specialized capabilities of the university and its component parts, suggest that "relevance" must be defined differentially, tentatively, and flexibly--and with reference to specific communities-of-interest--by individual academic disciplines and administrative units within the university and by clientele groups themselves.

The survey reveals that the central administration and college levels play an essentially passive role in relation to the community service function. Relevancy then for the most part is determined at the department level where there are apparently a variety of formal and informal procedures for that purpose ranging from very formal assessment techniques to a tendency by some departments to ignore community service, relevant or otherwise, altogether. A number of faculty members exhibited--precisely because there are such completely different approaches from department to department. They felt that the institution should be concerned that all

employees be treated more or less equally, or at least fairly, even while allowing the colleges, departments, and other subdivisions of the university the freedom to pursue a differential and flexible interpretation of the concept of "relevance." Relevance, then, cannot be limited to the narrow perceptions at any one level, but must include some elements of determination at each level.

Periodic redefinition of relevant service, however, must be accepted as an integral part of managerial responsibility. Since community service proposals, depending on their nature and magnitude, may impact on the university as a whole, a college, or a department, officials at every level must be prepared to accept or reject such proposals and consider the appropriate allocation of resources. It is these line officials, rather than the institute and center Directors who, according to the survey, make the critical decisions concerning promotion, tenure, and salary increases. Indeed, the low level of information on community service activities suggests that the center and institute Directors are generally unable to communicate effectively with the Deans, Chairpersons, or most of their faculty colleagues. The failure of the line officials, then, to confront hard community service questions leads, the survey reveals, to communication and control pathologies that result in opportunities lost through ignorance and nondecision. A university may well decide that it cannot assume a particular community service function, but the survey opens up the strong likelihood that opportunities are out there if the university's collective decision-making process is alert to and interested in them.*

*The survey discussed here was completed as part of a larger study: Report by the All-University Committee on Graduate and Professional Education. Graduate Education at Western Michigan University. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1976. Space limitations there prevented the inclusion of more than a brief segment of the Task Force Report. While the interpretation here is my responsibility, the following persons participated in a type of interdisciplinary cooperation in data gathering and analysis that is frequently recommended but rarely achieved: Professors Galen L. Alessi, Robert M. Ballard, Robert L. Erickson, John P. Flynn, Roy Groulx, Andrew E. Powell Ellen P. Robin, Rodney Roth, Roger L. Wallace, George Wood, and Graduate Student William A. Burdick

REFERENCES

1. Anderson, B. Robert, "Helping to Solve Community Problems," College Management 7 (June 1972): 20-34.

2. Barzun, Jacques. The American University: How It Runs, Where It Is Going. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

3. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. The Capitol and the Campus. April, 1971.

4. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. New Students and New Places. October, 1971.

5. Gardner, John W., "The Universities and the Cities," in John Caffrey, ed., The Future Academic Community: Continuity and Change. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1969.

6. Gould, Samuel B., "The Modern University: Concerns for the Future," Science 155 (March 24, 1967): 1511-1514.

7. Haberman, Martin and Quinn, Lois, "Assessing Faculty's Community Service," Adult Leadership 25 (January 1977): 140ff.

8. Holleb, Doris B. Colleges and the Urban Poor: The Role of Public Higher Education in Community Service. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1972.

9. Lindblom, Charles E., "Yale as a Political System," Yale Alumni Magazine (March 1971): 9-17.

10. Marshall, H. Peter and Miller, Robert W. The Challenges of a Community Development Role for the Public University. Morgantown, W. Va.: Office of Research and Development, 1976.

11. Mitchell, Howard E., "The Human Resources Center of the University of Pennsylvania," in Howard E. Mitchell, ed., The University and the Urban Crisis. New York: Behavioral Publications, 1974: 35-68.

12. Murphy, Thomas P., "University Bureaucracy and the Urban Thrust," in Thomas P. Murphy. Universities and the Urban Crisis. New York: Dunellen Publishing Co., 1975: 287-315.

13. Nash, George. The University and the City: Eight Cases of Involvement. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

14. Pendleton, William C. University/City Relations Revisited. A Ford Foundation Reprint, 1975.

15. Pietak, Raymond, A. and Spencer, Richard L., "18 Kinds of Services--Plus How to Start, Run, and Fund Them," College and University Business, 54: (April 1973) 45-58.

16. Syrett, Harold C., "Challenges Facing Urban Universities," School and Society 98 (February 1970): 89-92.

17. Weld, Edric A., "Urban Universities and Community Agencies: A Realistic Strategy for Cooperative Endeavors," mimeo, February 10, 1976.